Wide Area Information Servers:
An Executive Information System for Unstructured Files

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Abstract

In this paper we present a corporate information system for untrained users to search gigabytes of unformatted data using quasi-natural language and relevance feedback queries. The data can reside on distributed servers anywhere on a wide area network giving the users access to personal, corporate, and published information from a single interface. Effective queries can be turned into profiles, allowing the system to automatically alert the user when new data is available.

The system was tested by twenty executive users located in 6 cities. Our primary goal in building the system was to determine if the technology and infrastructure existed to make end-user searching of unstructured information profitable. We found that effective search and user interface technologies for end-users are available, but network technologies are still a limiting cost factor.

As a result of the experiment we are continuing the development of the system. This paper will describe the overall system architecture, the implemented subset, and the lessons learned.

AGARD TECHNICAL INFORMATION PANEL

SPECIALISTS' MEETING

OTTAWA, CANADA, 6-7 OCTOBER 1993

Author Information Sheet

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Kindly provide us with the following information:

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Biographical Note (in brief, please. This will be used by the Session Chairman who will be introducing you at the meeting):

(follows)

The full title of your Paper : Wide Area Information Servers: An Executive Information System for Unstructured Files.

Visual Aids (Other than Vu-graph machine or 35 mm slide projector)
If Vu-graph = overhead projector - great, else would like an overhead machine. If possible, a TV monitor and VCR machine

Brewster Kahle
President
Wide Area Information Servers, Inc.

Bio:

Inventor and architect of the WAIS electronic publishing system, Brewster Kahle has lead the multi-company effort to build a practical system for end-users to find and retrieve information from servers worldwide. Before this work, he helped design and build parallel supercomputers at Thinking Machines Corporation.

Brewster was schooled at MIT in Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence.

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REMARKS: ☒ ROUTINE   ☐ URGENT

*faxed author info sheet
BK's bio
unstructured files abstract*

2 April 1993

Dear Mr. Kahle

Sorry to insist but...I would be most grateful to receive your abstract for the TIP Fall meeting. The Meeting Committee will look at all the abstracts during our Spring Meeting scheduled for April, so this is now urgent.

Thank you.

Janet Ruiz

Janet Ruiz
Panel Secretary